

PARENTS' NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL UNION.*

CHILDREN'S GATHERING.

"THEN they departed and . . . came to Camelot, that is called in English, Winchester." (Malory).

Such was the delightful adventure of some 250 boys and girls who, accompanied by fathers, mothers, and governesses, invaded Winchester and took possession of the Guildhall from May 6th—9th. From homes in Scotland, Ireland, and the length and breadth of England they came, attracted by the spell of the old-world city, and bound together by their common work in the Parents' Union School. And they came by no means unprepared, for during the spring term every possible lesson had centred round Winchester. They had drawn a plan of the city and knew their way about at once; they had made plans of the Cathedral, indicating its architectural distinctions by colour; the older ones knew what geological as well as geographical struc-

ture to expect in the environs; and all, when they greeted the statue of the great King Alfred, thought of the troublous times in which he fought so bravely and the wise laws which he gave to England; but only the wonder and delight on the children's faces when they gazed up at the Round Table could reveal their love for good King Arthur and his knights, and the chivalrous ideals with which the legends of Malory and of Tennyson had inspired them.

Thus had they been prepared to enjoy the feast which was spread before them. On the day of arrival they were welcomed by the Hon. Mrs. Franklin in the words of Isaac Walton (himself connected with Winchester) which had been artistically lettered as a motto card for each of them:

"I will tell you, Scholar, I have heard a grave Divine say, that God has two dwellings: one in Heaven: and the other in a meek and thankful heart: which Almighty God grant to me and to my honest Scholar: and so you are welcome."

Then a loving and delightful letter from Miss Mason (the foundress and director of the Parents' Union School) was read, and a copy presented to each child. "I have found a door," said King Alfred, and Miss Mason reminded the children that the School was only a Door to let them into the House of Knowledge where they might live in one pleasant chamber or another all their lives. Next that inimitable Fairy Godmother arose before them, and the children (and grown-ups too) listened entranced while Miss Marie Shedlock told Arthurian legend and story after story, with intervals in which the children themselves sang folk-songs, sympathetically conducted by Mr. W. H. Kerridge, Mus. Bac., an interesting point being that neither performers nor conductor had met before and yet the songs rang true. In the evening, the older girls and grown-up people, including many who had passed through the School, listened earnestly to an address by the Hon. Lily Montagu on "The Happiness of Work," which told of the need for Girls' Clubs and of the rest and joy which all might find in service for others.

Tuesday opened with a special service in the Choir of the Cathedral, which the Dean himself conducted, drawing from the parable of the feeding of the five thousand the hope that every young life might be of service to God. Then a happy morning spent in lessons, Swedish drill, and Morris-dancing. The afternoon brought disappointment, but though rain prevented the nature walks and sight-seeing so eagerly looked forward to, the children's faces showed not a cloud nor a grumble (a striking tribute to their training), and all entered heartily into the "Indoor Scouting," conducted by Miss J. Mellis Smith. There was outdoor scouting another day, and it may here be mentioned that Miss Mellis Smith, of the House of Education, Ambleside, has so adapted the system of scouting for the Parents' Union School that it is suitable for little children and for girls as well as boys.

Another treat for the children was a lecture by Miss Ethel L. Turner, F.L.S., on "The Time of the Singing of Birds," illustrated by her own beautiful photographic slides. Miss Turner's

THE EDUCATION OF PARENTS.

1912

THE recent congress of children and parents at Winchester has probably upset a good many homes. Every well-regulated child knows that there are two authorities in the world—home and school. The two are as distinct as food and drink; they are each self-contained inevitable, and authoritative to such an extent that their orders are part of the day's work. Now there comes a sudden suggestion that the two find it necessary to meet, to confer, to find out from the children themselves exactly what they are and what they want. This is disturbing. If grown-ups do not know everything, wherefore do we blindly obey them? All we of the governed age know that "they" are incomprehensible; we have hitherto met the case by saying that we cannot understand them, but they are probably after something or other, and we'd better do as we're told on the whole. Now we want to know, *Are they after something, and do they know what it is they are after?* Apparently they are in some doubt. Else why these gatherings at Winchester? Why these whisperings and fidgetings of our mothers? One thing we know—they may have ideas as to how we should behave at home, but they have entirely forgotten how to behave themselves in class-rooms.

The Parents' National Educational Union has really plenty of work to do if it wants to educate the parent. Mothers, in particular, are terrors to all headmasters and headmistresses. One reason why boarding schools are better, in the opinion of many, than day schools is that the scholars are not so much hampered by the solicitude of their home folk. They are under one discipline, not two, and are not unsettled by two or three changes a day of code and behaviour and ideal.

Mothers hardly ever realise that one of the chief benefits of a school training is its suppression of too much individuality—of that superfluity of individuality which will so easily become egoism. At home the child of the house is its darling; he or she or they, as the case may be, cannot be blind to the fact that, however much open discipline is inculcated by mother, the daily life of the family is arranged to suit the needs of the rising generation. At school, on the other hand, personal wishes and tastes must be subordinated to the impersonal task of assimilating information which other people have decided is good for one.

One thing is notable. The spoiled child has arisen

since education was removed from the hands of the mother to those of the master or mistress. The days of home education were the days of "Yes, sir," and "No, ma'am" to parents, the days of courtesies on entering and leaving the room where those august beings were; the days of rigid reticence on the one hand, of awe-struck obedience on the other. In those days mothers and fathers, having the education of their children either in their own hands or under their close supervision, controlling it in harmony with their own theories and opinions, were necessarily aware of the inevitable disciplines and repressions which must accompany education. A walk with papa was a kind of University Extension lecture, prolific of information; a talk with mamma was a sermon in which the preacher was not restrained by the decent impersonality of the pulpit. Parents announced on frequent occasions that they made themselves disagreeable from an affectionate sense of duty. They coined that unholy phrase about whipping hurting them more.

Now parents have forgotten all that. They write to the school authorities about wet feet or draughty rooms, or the school curriculum; they cannot get it out of their heads that their children ought to be treated as individuals, openly and reverently, and discipline stood on its head and left there in favour of My boy, or My daughter Mary. They do not stop to consider that every child in the school probably has parents claiming the same thing on his or her behalf. The Parents' National Educational Union Every parent is at liberty to choose deliberately and with care the school to which his children shall go. Having thus selected an authority, he—and his wife, too—ought to stick to it and uphold it, save for very grave cause. What is wanted at home is a realisation of the fact that if, at school, education is in some ways considered before the educatee, the tendency of home is to forget the benefits of education in the personal tastes of the beloved child. If the P.N.E.U. can manage to establish some proportion between the scholastic view of a class and the home view of its members it will give education an enormous help.

lectures have the merit of laying such stress on the character and habits of the bird that all thought of egg-collecting vanishes. But perhaps the joy of the gathering, and of all the months of preparation for it, was focussed in the Historical Dress Party, when all the children donned correct, and often gorgeous, apparel, being marshalled into groups illustrating the various periods of the history of Winchester, in which may be seen in miniature the history of all England: King Arthur, with his knights and dames, mitred bishops and fair queens, down to a little tot in a big beaver hat—the Princess Victoria of a recent day, and including a notable group of Jane Austen's characters.

Nor were the lessons themselves the least interesting item even to the youngest children. Imagine the delight of a child taught alone, or with brothers and sisters of a different age, finding itself in a class each of which had done exactly the same work! The teachers were all ex-students of the House of Education, Ambleside (the Training College in connection with the Union), and the lessons were an interesting illustration of Miss Mason's methods. But never surely were lessons carried on under greater difficulties, for the scholars were unknown to one another and unknown to their teacher, and each class was surrounded with listeners; still in most instances the children's interest never flagged.

The Parents' Union (Correspondence) School was founded twenty-one years ago by Miss Charlotte M. Mason for the help of mothers and governesses who teach in the home schoolroom, and its curriculum is based upon principles which are a part of the definite system of education expounded by her in the "Home Education Series." Her aim is to develop the child's personality and to satisfy his natural appetite for knowledge by acquaintance with things and with living books; a child has "no time to waste upon twaddle and upon text books crammed by the mere dust of learning." And to quote Miss Mason again, "The first thing that this school is designed to teach is a love of knowledge for its own sake"; examinations are set for the help of the teacher, but no competitive marks are awarded. That the children really learn *how* to read books that are literature is proved by their ability to narrate a passage in their own words, and with little hesitation, after once reading or hearing it read; and boys and girls of nine years old can really enjoy such classics as the "Idylls of the King." The curriculum is intended to help the child to a knowledge of God, of man, and of the natural world. We heard attractive lessons on Scripture, the characters of Saul and David being grasped by children of nine and ten; on natural history, the beaks, feet, and nests of birds in various classes, and a thrilling study of caddises and their pond environment, illustrated with many glasses of specimens; a "picture-talk" enabling little mites of seven to see Van Eyck's "St. Cecilia"; and a talk on "Everyday morals" which was illustrated by readings from Carlyle's passages on Work in "Past and Present."

Truly, this was a unique and notable gathering. It was an education in itself to the chil-

dren present to read letters of greeting from their fellow-scholars in our far Dominions, to feel their common work and play, and that they themselves are part of a large whole. And the older children, at all events, will never forget the talks from Miss Parish (Secretary of the P.N.E.U.) on the motto of the School, "I am, I can, I ought, I will," showing them that though we have no choice about the "I am" and "I ought," we have a great responsibility in regard to the "I can" and "I will," for which all our lessons and our play must fit us, the greatest lesson of all being that of trust in God's help.

F. F. B.

SCOUTING AND SCOUTCRAFT.

Scouting forms an important part of the House of Education curricula, and no wonder, for it was Miss Charlotte Mason who inspired General Baden Powell with the Boy Scout idea. In the handicrafts exhibition there were on view specimens of the tests which students have to pass, and for each test passed they receive a tassel—green for one subject, and the addition of white and black for others. When the whole of the tests have been passed they are awarded a white tip, and the owner of such a distinction may be regarded as a fully-equipped scout. The scouting is under the direction of Miss Nellie Smith, who undertook indoor scouting at the Guildhall on Tuesday, and on Thursday a special train conveyed them to King's Worthy, where they occupied a field in doing scout work.

WALKS AND VISITS.

In addition to the various gatherings, walks for nature study were arranged, and Winchester Cathedral, Winchester Castle, Wolvesey Palace, Winchester College, St. Cross, Hursley, and other spots of interest were visited on Thursday. At Wolvesey Mr. N. C. H. Nisbett was the guide, at the College Mr. Herbert Chitty, and at St. Cross the Master (Canon Gauston).

Hampshire Observer.

P.N.E.U.

Our readers this week will no longer be strangers to the meaning of these letters, for our full report of the Conference and Coming-of-age celebrations of the Parents' National Educational Union provide plenty of information as to the aims and objects of this widely-spread organisation. The selection of Winchester for these coming-of-age celebrations is a distinct honour to the city, and so highly is the hospitality of Winchester esteemed by the six hundred visitors who have graced our local life during the past week that we have filled a number of our columns with the recording of their doings. We believe the record will be read with deep interest by numbers of those who knew little or nothing of the P.N.E.U. before to-day. For educationalists there is food for thought and reflection; for workers in the social sphere there is counsel and advice. But above all the doctrine that knowledge is the greatest asset in human life is taught with insistence, and in a centre of learning like Winchester it will not be lost on the cultured classes. High ideals and the love of literature are features which the Union seeks to cultivate and its whole aspiration seems to be admirably summed up by Wordsworth—

Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good,
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

Our visitors have gone, but we believe they will leave behind an atmosphere of culture and refinement which will not be lost on this city of learning.

Northern Daily Telegraph,

IDEAS AND HABIT.

This week at Winchester the Parents' National Educational Union is celebrating the coming of age of the Parents' Union School. At the opening meeting Lady Northesk presided, and an address was given by Lady Campbell, in which she claimed that Miss Mason, the founder of the Union, had presented a philosophy of education, not a mere system. The Union, Lady Campbell said, stands for the principle that character is everything and that "the two main functions of education are the presentation of ideas and the formation of habit." The central principle is that a religious basis of work must be maintained, and from that flowed all the other principles. "Mothers," added Lady Campbell, "could not afford nowadays to be amateurs or to muddle through somehow. The material they work on is too precious to be experimented upon." The children attending the celebration number 250, and they have a series of lessons each morning. They must be having a delightful time. On the afternoon of the opening day a lady told fairy tales, and the children sang folk songs. In the evening the Hon. Lady Montagu gave an address on "The Happiness of Work." Verily, education can be made delightful.

CHILDREN IN CONFERENCE.

Appreciation of Parents and Pupils of
the Winchester Meeting.

Unqualified satisfaction is being felt by the organisers of the Parents' National Educational Union regarding the recent conference at Winchester.

During the four days of the conference, from May 6 to 9, while parents—chiefly mothers—and children learnt many valuable lessons, appreciation in the well-thought-out programme was generally expressed. Now that the organisers are home again once more, it is easy to measure success to a certain extent, although the effect of the lessons learnt on all sides can naturally hardly be expected to show itself at present. As a matter of fact, the children who came from such far-away parts of the United Kingdom as outlying districts in the Highlands of Scotland and North

and South Ireland, have borne away with them a very greatly enlarged idea of the union to which they belong, and a clearer notion of the lines on which they are being taught in schools or by private governesses.

The authorities of the P.N.E.U. express themselves as being much pleased with the self-possession of the children in class. In reply to a question as to whether any embarrassment was shown by the small pupils—many of whom were only children, taught alone at home—at the ordeal of "doing lessons" with a strange teacher and an audience of other children's mothers, the secretary explained that the children seemed keenly anxious throughout to do their best. There was a complete absence of shyness and the children were just as natural as anyone would wish them to be, keenly interested in the sights of Winchester, and ready to follow out every detail of the programme. One noticeable point was the content which was expressed in each individual programme. There were no jealousies and heart-burnings because one child had to

drill while another was detailed off to spend half an hour in Morris dancing.

Twenty-four classes in all were held at a time, each one containing an average of ten pupils. Some of the mothers were afraid that the younger or more delicate children would suffer from the excitement. They were, however, surprised to find that the most nervous child was not one whit the worse, possibly owing to the wise rule that early bed-time was insisted upon.

Perhaps one of the most popular parts of the programme were the expeditions to Wolvesey Castle, the cathedral and college, and other places. Mr. Nesbit—who had so much to do with the Winchester pageant a few years ago—proved an excellent and painstaking cicerone.

Messages were received from Parents' Union Schoolchildren all over the world, and many of the Winchester boys and girls, when they dispersed, agreed to correspond with their small co-scholars Overseas, describing to them some of the excitements and interests of the meeting.

Girls preponderated on the whole. The contingent of boys was chiefly made up of small youths who had not yet reached the age of preparatory schools, although a few older boys came from schools carried on on co-educational principles. Two schools of this kind which were represented were St. George's, Harpenden, and that of Mrs. Hickson, at Swanage.

The prospect of "indoor scouting," which produced a feeling of wonder in the minds of parents when the week's programme was first published, has probably set the example for many wet-day amusements for the children in the future. Indoor scouting proved to be, however, but another name for a talented and clever method of stimulating the children's powers of observation, gilding the pill in a particularly glowing manner. Various tests were made, such as that of drawing objects on a blackboard, and then covering up the sketch immediately. It was then left to the children to write down as much as they could remember or had taken in at a glance.

MOTHERS AND GROWN-UP FRIENDS TAKING PART WITH CHILDREN IN NOVEL SCHOOL CLASSES AT HISTORIC GUILDHALL.



(1) A class in progress in the banquet-hall. (2) Mothers and friends take part in the lessons. (3) Some of the "pupils." (4) The Hon. Mrs. Franklyn hon. organising secretary.

Mothers and children are forming members of school classes at Winchester this week. Under the auspices of the Parents' Educational Union a congress is being held in the historic Guildhall, the object being to provide a meeting ground for intercourse between parents, teachers, and all interested in education. Yesterday a daily time-table of lessons was begun by students trained at the House of Education, Ambleside, when these pictures were taken. The subjects include tales, pictorial talks, natural history, citizenship, architecture, everyday morals, etc.

Daily Sketch Photographs.

books they could gain the greatest knowledge they could possess as human beings. If they read such a book as "Alton Locks" they got sympathy with the working man, and they would be able to say, for instance, straight out that during the late Coal Strike all the miners that were not in the wrong were men to be understood people. The more they knew of people the more they knew of the divine nature, and the more they saw that the blacks they did not like were the great sinners. They had a great example of that at the time of the terrible *Thane* tragedy, when people whom they would have considered as merely craving for money and what money could bring, showed that they were capable of the best, because they were human beings, and to be a human being meant to have the possibility of being great. Therefore she hoped they would carry away from that week the power of getting more and more out of the world around them, and forming their own judgment and gain-

a spirit of humility and thankfulness. She then asked them to stand and say with her, "Alfred's Prayer," and when they had done she proceeded to say that their feeling of thankfulness was brimming over so that they were unable to express it, but she would like them to help her to send messages of thanks to some of the people who had made that work possible. She asked them to give a good clap and to the Dean and authorities of the Cathedral and to the Master of St. Cross and Mr. Nisbett, who had helped them to enjoy with an understanding heart the treasures of Winchester, to Mr. Kerbridge, who had done Winchester, to have thought impossible in what one could do, and to Mr. Grant, the carpenter of the hall, who had played the part of a magician and made all their arrangements so perfect and so simple.

In the evening the Committee gave an "At Home" to adults, the guests being

teachers who had helped her, and a group of
and delightful lessons to Mr. Mrs., and Miss
Parsons, who arranged the party which would
always be for them a delightful memory. &
Miss Wis, who arranged the exhibition and
had handled their much-prized needlework
with such loving care, to Miss Lamb, who en-
gaged the sewing, and all the stewards, and
especially Miss Allen and Miss Melvin Webb.
The last named was Miss Pariali's assistant
in London, and it was to her they owed their
beautifully written notices and much of the
organisation of the gathering.
To Mr. Carter, the dean of gratitude; al-
though they owed a growing debt to him, and
was Miss Mason's right hand, and helped her
in conducting the vast organisation of the
P.T.S. Had they noticed the map which
showed them into how many parts of the world
the school stretched, and in what different
places their school fellows lived? As regards
Miss Pariali, she could not attempt to express
any thanks; she only asked them to give their
brightest glances and loudest cheers.

This was done, and then the oldest school

songs followed, after which there was singing and dancing, and a farewell talk was given.

The children then dispersed to see the Cathedral, and afterwards assembled by Mr. H. where they were photographed by Mr. H. Whilst there they expressed a desire to send the following telegram to Miss Mason, which was done:—"Loving thanks from the boys and children assembled in the Clove Winchester Cathedral."

HANDICRAFT EXHIBITION.

The handicrafts exhibition in connection with the Congress has been a feature, and examination of the various exhibits shows how admirable is the teaching which has been imparted in the Home of Education. The exhibits were a combination of the best of the work done in the Home, and with the

aircraft exhibition in conjunction with the show has been a feature, and exhibitors

There are a number of things sent by old scholars. The House of Education sent many natural history books, the closest to the natural history and the truth was the drawing of objects in the being all of a high order of intelligence, it would be impossible to participate all the exhibits, but we were able to see and hear. There was a very suddenly-made tool chest, work of a boy of 17, a number of very fine pencil marks of architectural features of the Cathedral, the most artistic of the features of the collection of dolls dressed to represent W. Chester historical characters, the work of girls from eight to 15, a model of King Arthur's barge, containing three dolls to represent the three queens who came to feel Arthur, a very fine sampler, the work of a girl of twelve, a number of sketches of a handkerchief, a set of lanterns, which did the student, a set of specimens of lace work done by a girl of 15, some excellent drawings of brasses from Hansbury, done by a girl of 12, Franklin, aged 12, and some of the drawings which were sent to Mr. Albert's Royal Drawing Society's Exhibition, which gained distinction. These were memory drawings, and the work of a child of nine marked her as a true artist. A study of a skull was from her work was quite a surprise. The exhibition attracted a great deal of attention.



THE IDEAL IN THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

The Children's Congress, the gathering of small people organised by the Parents' National Educational Union, was continued at Winchester yesterday. The top picture shows interested spectators round a class composed of six-year-old children in the Banqueting Hall of the Guildhall. The lower picture on the left depicts some of the children who are being instructed for the purpose of the demonstration, and the portrait is of the Hon. Mrs. Franklin, the organising secretary of the Congress.

("Daily Graphic" photographs.)